

I claim:

1. In a locking device having a locking head movable between a locked and an unlocked state, a shackle member having a linear shank with a thickness dimension and first and second end portions, a latch portion disposed at the shank first end portion configured to engage said locking head, and a stop member disposed at the shank second end portion, a method for varying the diameter of the linear shank to adapt the locking device to variable sized apertures in components to be locked with said device, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a sleeve with an inner diameter sized to closely fit over said shank;
- (b) telescopingly engaging said sleeve onto said shank;
- (c) retaining said sleeve in position on said shank;
- (d) positioning said shank and sleeve within apertures of the components to be locked; and
- (e) engaging said locking head with said latch portion.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said method further comprises the steps of providing a plurality of sleeves each having a common inner diameter for telescopingly engaging said shank and a different outer diameter, selecting a sleeve having an outer diameter corresponding to the size of the apertures in the components to be locked, and inserting the selected sleeve onto said shank to vary the diameter thereof according to the size of the apertures in the components to be locked.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said method further comprises the steps of providing a plurality of sleeves having variable inner and outer diameters and configured to be selectively nested within each other, selecting

one or more nested sleeves having a combined outer diameter corresponding to the size of the apertures in the components to be locked, and inserting the selected combination of sleeves onto said shank to vary the diameter thereof according to the size of the apertures in the components to be locked.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said sleeve is retained in position on said shank by providing an annular groove in said shank proximate the latch portion thereof, and then positioning a retaining member in said groove about said shank after the sleeve has been telescopically positioned onto said shank.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said sleeve is retained in position on said shank by providing a first set of threads on one end portion of said sleeve and a second set of threads on said stop portion, and then threadably engaging said sleeve with said stop portion after said sleeve has been telescopically positioned onto said shank.

6. In a locking device having a locking head movable between a locked and an unlocked state, a shackle member including a linear shank having first and second end portions and a length and a thickness, said shackle member including a latch portion disposed at the shank first end portion and configured to engage said locking head, and a stop member disposed at the shank second end portion, a method for varying the diameter of the linear shank to adapt the locking device to variable sized apertures in components to be locked with said device, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a sleeve with an inner diameter sized to closely fit over said shank in an engaged position with said sleeve having a sleeve length sufficient to extend over a majority of the length of said shank when in the engaged position;

(b) in the alternative, either

(i) telescopingly engaging said sleeve onto said shank and thereafter positioning said shank and sleeve together within one sized aperture or

(ii) positioning said shank without said sleeve being engaged thereon within another sized aperture; and

(c) thereafter engaging said locking head with said latch portion.

7. The method according to claim 6, including the step of resisting removal of said sleeve from said shank by providing a compressible resilient element operative to engage said sleeve and said shank when said sleeve is in the engaged position.

8. A locking device comprising:

(a) a shackle member having a shank terminating in first and second end portions;

(b) a locking head movable between a locked state and an unlocked state;

(c) a latch portion disposed at said shank first end portion and configured to selectively engage said locking head;

(d) a stop portion disposed at said shank second end portion;

(e) a sleeve configured for selective engagement on said shank to vary a thickness dimension thereof; and

(f) a retaining member for releasably securing said sleeve on said shank.

9. A locking device according to claim 8, wherein said shank first end portion includes an annular groove formed therein proximate said latch portion, and wherein said retaining member comprises a retention element configured for selective positioning within said annular groove to maintain said sleeve in position on said shank.

10. A locking device according to claim 9, wherein said retention element is a C-shaped washer that has facing arm ends that define a gap therebetween for selective positioning in said annular groove.

11. A locking device according to claim 8, wherein said retaining member comprises a first set of threads disposed on one end of said sleeve and configured for threaded engagement with said stop portion.

12. A locking device according to claim 11, wherein said stop portion includes an end portion having a second set of threads disposed therein and configured to receive and engage said first set of threaded elements disposed on said sleeve.

13. A convertible locking device comprising:

- (a) a locking head movable between a locked and an unlocked state;
- (b) a shackle member having a shank with a thickness dimension and first and second end portions;
- (c) a latch portion disposed at said shank first end portion and configured to engage said locking head;
- (d) a stop member disposed at said shank second end portion;
- (e) a set of sleeve elements for selectively coupling to said shank to vary the thickness dimension thereof; and
- (f) a retaining apparatus for selectively securing at least one sleeve element of said set of sleeve elements in position on said shank.

14. A locking device according to claim 13, wherein said retaining apparatus comprises a first set of threads disposed on one end of each said sleeve element configured for threaded engagement with said stop member.

15. The improvement of claim 13, wherein said stop member includes an end portion having a second set of threads disposed therein and configured to receive and engage said first set of thread elements disposed on said sleeve element.

16. A locking hitch pin device for interconnecting a hitch bar with a hitch receiver, said bar and receiver each including apertures disposed therein for receiving the hitch pin device, said device comprising:

- (a) a hitch pin shank having first and second end portions and a thickness dimension;
- (b) a latch portion disposed at said shank first end portion;
- (c) a locking head member movable between locked and unlocked states and configured for selective engagement with said latch portion;
- (d) a stop member disposed at said shank second end portion;
- (e) a sleeve for selective engagement with said hitch pin shank to selectively vary the thickness dimension thereof to match the size diameter of the casing and receiver apertures to permit snug engagement therewith; and
- (f) a retaining apparatus for selectively securing said sleeve in position on said hitch pin shank.

17. A locking device according to claim 16, wherein said device includes a set of at least two sleeve elements each having an inner diameter sized for mounting on said pin element and each with a different outer diameter to match varying sized bar and receiver apertures, and wherein said retaining apparatus comprises a first set of threads disposed on one end of each said sleeve element and configured for threaded engagement with said stop member.

18. A locking device according to claim 17, wherein said stop member includes an end portion having a second set of threads disposed therein and configured to receive and engage said first set of thread elements disposed on said sleeve element.